



Public Safety Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 8, 2026
4:30 pm

LOCATION OF MEETING: 96 RUSSELL DRIVE

NOTICE: Pursuant to the requirements of Section 19.84, Wis Stats., notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Village of Random Lake, at which a quorum of the Village Board may attend in order to gather information about a subject which they have decision making responsibility. The meeting will be held at the above noted date, time. Notice of the Village Board Quorum (**Chairperson to announce the following if a quorum of the Village Board is in attendance at the meeting:** Please let the minutes reflect that a quorum of the Village Board are present and that the Village Board members may be making comments if the rules are suspended to allow them to do so.)

Google Meet joining info
Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/tez-bpox-are>
Or dial: (US) +1 585-969-5141 PIN: 356 353 927#

All meetings are open to the public and public comment is allowed on all agenda items during the time of the agenda item being discussed.

Agenda

1. Call to Order, Roll Call.
2. Discussion and Possible Action on the following:
 - a. Approval of the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes.
 - b. Approval of the December 4, 2025, meeting minutes.
 - c. Recommendation to the Village Board related to speed reduction on village streets.
 - d. Recommendation to the Village Board related to illegal parking.
 - e. Recommendation to the Village Board related to the County Wide Fire-EMS Sustainability Analysis.
3. Future Agenda items.

4. Adjourn.

Items on the Agenda may be taken out of order as listed. Posted to all village posting locations on 01/07/2026.

WI Open Meeting Law (Wis. Stat. 19.83(2) and 19.84(2)) In general, the open meetings law grants citizens the right to attend and observe open session meetings of governmental bodies but does not require a governmental body to allow members of the public to speak or actively participate in the body's meeting. A governmental body is free to determine for itself whether and to what extent it will allow citizen participation at its meetings.



LOCATION OF MEETING: 96 RUSSELL
DRIVE

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order, Roll Call** Chairman Mueller called the meeting to order at 4:45 pm. Members present included Chuck Mueller. Member Rachel Fuller attended virtually. Village staff present included Clerk/Treasurer Stephanie Waala, DPW Director Peter Lederer, and Fire Chief Pat Depies.

2. **Discussion and Possible Action on the approval of the September 15, 2025, meeting minutes.**

No action taken, item to be moved to next agenda.

3. **Discussion and Possible Action on the approval of the September 29, 2025, meeting minutes.**

Member Fuller made a motion to approve as submitted, motion was seconded by Chairman Mueller. Motion carried 2-0.

4. **Update and Discussion related to street closures permits.**

Chairman Mueller informed the committee that this item is regarding the Color Run and the Homecoming parade. There were concerns with the Color Run as people were running on the roads and not on the sidewalks. They would like to investigate changing the route. Chief Depies informed the committee that he would like to regroup and go over a better plan.

Cecelia Dahm, Color Run representative, informed the committee that it was their assumption that the Fire Dept and the DPW were going to be closing and maintaining the streets. Director Lederer informed the committee that according to their application it says no village staff is needed and it would be manned by volunteers.

Chief Depies informed the committee that the run can look into implementing different start times so there is not a lot of congestion on the roads. Mrs. Dahm informed the committee that they would like to have barricades and village vehicles to block the streets like they did in the past.

Chairman Mueller informed the committee that they can move forward from the past. Director Lederer informed the committee that for the Homecoming parade they had to call all his staff in for overtime to close the roads which was not originally paid for.

Mrs. Dahm requested if they can reach out to businesses to get vehicles. Director Lederer informed the committee that they would need better communication on when the roads are to be closed.

Chairman Mueller requested applications come two months before the event and more information be listed about the volunteers.

5. Discussion and Possible Recommendation to the Village Board related to Parking Signs.

Member Fuller informed the committee that she heard back from some vendors and is awaiting quotes on the signs. Director Lederer informed the committee that they went out on Thursday before the Saturday event and put up paper no parking signs which were taped to some bollards and light poles.

Member Fuller informed the committee that the options they are looking into are plastic or metal bifold so that they can be reused. Chairman Mueller inquired if there would be funds in the budget for next year for these signs. Member Fuller informed the committee that they will not know until they receive the quotes.

6. Discussion and Possible Recommendation to the Finance Committee related to the Random Lake Fire Department.

Chairman Mueller informed the committee that there was discussion about an increase that the village pays to the Fire Department. Chief Depies informed the committee that for the other entities that pay there is no set amount, and they do increases when they can. Fredonia is the only one with a contract with a set increase amount. 2015 was the last year that the increase was done in Random Lake. There has been a 33.2% inflation rate over the past 10 years. Currently they are requesting a 10% increase for 2026.

Chairman Mueller made a motion to recommend to the Finance Committee for review, motion was seconded by Member Fuller. Motion carried 2-0.

7. Future Agenda items.

Signs

8. Adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Items on the Agenda may be taken out of order as listed. Created by Stephanie Waala on 10/27/2025.

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LOCATION OF MEETING: 96 RUSSELL
DRIVE

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order, Roll Call** Chairman Mueller called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. Members present included Chuck Mueller and Jamie Vorpahl. Village staff present included Clerk/Treasurer Stephanie Waala, DPW Director Peter Lederer, and Fire Chief Pat Depies.

2. **Discussion and Possible Action on the approval of the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes.**

Item to be moved to next meeting's agenda.

3. **Discussion and Possible Action on the approval of the November 11, 2025, meeting minutes.**

Member Vorpahl made a motion to approve as submitted, motion was seconded by Chairman Mueller. Motion carried 2-0.

4. **Discussion and Possible Recommendation to the Village Board related to speed bumps.**

Chairman Mueller informed the committee that they were awaiting quotes for the speed bumps. Director Lederer informed the board that the cost would be about \$8,500 per bump.

Member Vorpahl requested that the speed bumps on E Shore be re-evaluated next year. Director Lederer informed the committee that he has only heard complaints about parking there. Fire Chief Depies informed the committee that he has concerns about if a car is parked there then it would be difficult to get a fire truck down the road. Chairman Mueller informed the committee that they will re-evaluate this when it becomes an issue.

5. **Discussion and Possible Recommendation to the Village Board related to the intersection of 5th St and Carroll St.**

Chairman Mueller informed the committee that they are considering putting a stop sign in for the southbound traffic on Carroll St, at 5th St. Director Lederer informed the board that he would be more in favor of lowering the speed limit first.

6. **Discussion and Possible Recommendation to the Village Board related to speed reduction on village streets.**

Director Lederer informed the committee that he would like to look into not allowing parking on E Shore Dr as this would help better than lowering the speed limit. Clerk Waala informed the committee that they are awaiting response from the attorney in regard to avenues they can take to reduce speed limits.

7. Discussion and Possible Recommendation to the Village Board related to illegal parking.

Chairman Mueller read the current village ordinance. Clerk Waala informed the committee that it looks like the only issue would be to find someone to contract with who does towing. Chairman Mueller informed the committee that they can do an RFP to see services in the area. Chief Depies suggested that they look into other municipalities and what they do.

8. Future Agenda items.

Traffic Map

9. Adjourned at 5:07 pm.

Items on the Agenda may be taken out of order as listed. Created by Stephanie Waala on 01/07/2026.

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meeting. A governmental body is free to determine for itself whether and to what extent it will allow citizen participation at its meetings.



Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>

speed limits

1 message

Lee D. Turonie <LDT@dempseylaw.com>

Tue, Dec 23, 2025 at 1:42 PM

To: Duane Urbanski <durbanski@randomlakewi.com>, Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>

Attached maps have approximate distances in feet marked. Wis. Stat. s. 346.57 defines local speed limits. Namely:

(1)(ar) "Outlying district" means the territory contiguous to and including any highway within the corporate limits of a city or village where on each side of the highway within any 1,000 feet along such highway the buildings in use for business, industrial or residential purposes fronting thereon average more than 200 feet apart.

Fixed limits:

(4)(e) Twenty-five miles per hour on any highway within the corporate limits of a city or village, other than on highways in outlying districts in such city or village.

(4)(f) Thirty-five miles per hour in any outlying district within the corporate limits of a city or village.

Carroll Street: going east to west, it appears to be 35 mph because of "outlying district"; then you hit a lot of driveways with buildings averaging less than 200 feet apart = 25 mph; then you have another stretch without buildings for 35 mph again.

Orth Drive: going east to west again, it appears to be 35 mph because of "outlying district"; then it still looks like 35 mph assuming that those houses are not built yet and/or do not have direct driveway access.

Wis. Stat. s. 349.11 is whether and how you can change any speed limits.

Local authorities may **not**:

(3)(c) Modify any existing speed limit without the consent of the department except to reduce the speed limit as provided under sub. (10) [under construction], or to increase the speed limit stated in s. 346.57 (4) (e), (f) or (g), or to reduce by 10 miles per hour or less the speed limit stated in s. 346.57 (4) (a), (b) or (d) to (j), or to reduce by 15 miles per hour or less the speed limit stated in s. 346.57 (4) (k). Whenever department approval is required, no signs giving notice of a modification of the speed limit may be erected until such approval has been received.

You need DOT approval to increase the speed limits on these roads. Your stated goal is instead to decrease these speed limits. The statute does not require DOT approval to do that first. Therefore, I agree with the League of WI Municipalities. Have the DPW person double check my work on the maps, etc. These statutes are all worded in the negative, which is what makes them hard to read. Thank you,

Lee D. Turonie, Attorney

Dempsey Law Firm, LLP

Office: 715-848-2966



Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>

Re: Towing

1 message

Julie B <jbrey@cedargroviewi.com>
To: Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>

Fri, Dec 5, 2025 at 8:42 AM

Hi there ~

Unfortunately - no - we don't have a process or contract in place.

Feels like it's one of those things that has happened so no one has brought it up.

I'll have to make a list for conversation.....

Thanks,
Julie

Julie M. Brey

Julie M. Brey
Clerk / Treasurer
Village of Cedar Grove
22 E Willow Ave / PO Box 426
Cedar Grove WI 53013
Office (920)668-6523
Fax (920) 668-8597

From: Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>**Sent:** Thursday, December 4, 2025 5:10 PM**To:** Village of Fredonia - Michelle Johnson <mjohnson@village.fredonia.wi.us>; Howards Treasurer <clerktreasurer@howardsgroviewi.gov>; Julie Brey <jbrey@cedargroviewi.com>**Subject:** Towing

Hi everyone,

We are reviewing our traffic and parking ordinances. Within it is a section related to Towing. I see on all of your websites that you as well have sections similar to ours.

The issue we are running into is that we are allowed to tow a vehicle but currently do not have a contracted service to do this service. Do any of you have a written contract with any local services or have a procedure in place for when this needs to be done?

Stephanie Waala
Clerk/Treasurer
Village of Random Lake
920-994-4852



Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>

Re: Towing

1 message

Village of Fredonia - Michelle Johnson <clerk@fredoniawi.gov>
To: Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>

Mon, Dec 8, 2025 at 9:51 AM

Hi Stephanie,

We do not have a contract with a local tower. If our marshal identifies a vehicle that must be towed, he works with Ozaukee County dispatch to get someone out to Fredonia. If our DPW director needs a car towed, we would have to call around and find someone willing to come out. Eddie's in Saukville would be our first call.

We recently updated our parking ordinance and now require permits for overnight parking in municipal lots... this helped with nuisance vehicles and made it easier for our residents and our DPW crew during snow events.

Let me know if there is anything else I can help with!

Happy holidays!

Michelle Johnson **Please note new email: clerk@fredoniawi.gov

Village Clerk

Village of Fredonia

[242 Fredonia Avenue](#)

PO Box 159

Fredonia, WI 53021

Phone: 262-692-9125

Elected Officials and Members of Village Committees: In order to comply with Open Meetings requirements, please limit any reply to only the sender of this electronic communication. Please be aware that written communication, emails and faxes are generally considered open public records.



From: Stephanie Waala <clerktreasurer@randomlakewi.com>**Sent:** Thursday, December 4, 2025 5:10 PM**To:** Village of Fredonia - Michelle Johnson <clerk@fredoniawi.gov>; Howards Treasurer <clerktreasurer@howardsgrovewi.gov>; Julie Brey <jbrey@cedargrovewi.com>**Subject:** Towing

Hi everyone,

County Wide Fire-EMS Sustainability Analysis

Prepared for

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY, WISCONSIN



NOVEMBER 22, 2024

McMAHON ASSOCIATES, INC.

1445 McMAHON DRIVE NEENAH, WI 54956 Mailing: PO BOX 1025 NEENAH, WI 54957-1025 PH 920.751.4200 MCMGRP.COM

County Wide Fire-EMS Sustainability Analysis

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- VII. SUSTAINABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS
- VII. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



I. INTRODUCTION

McMahon Associates, Inc. (McMAHON) was retained by Sheboygan County to develop a comprehensive, detailed county wide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) sustainability analysis. Sheboygan County desires to lead in delivering services to its citizens most efficiently and cost-effectively possible. Sheboygan County is served by a variety of types of services for fire and EMS response including career, private, and paid-on-call/volunteer. Recruitment and retention of personnel in all areas of fire and EMS have become challenging, however, the volunteer sector is the most challenged. The willingness of citizens to dedicate time to volunteer fire and EMS agencies has and continues to decline. Meanwhile, communities that have relied on those services are under pressure to continue to deliver quality services with minimal property tax and fee increases.

This study provides an assessment of the delivery of fire and EMS services in the County, how they are funded and also provides recommendations on how the County and its municipalities can sustain those services.

II. PROJECT WORK TASKS

To complete the objectives set forth in the Study RFP, McMAHON met with representatives of the County and fire and EMS agencies in the County. Data and information submitted by the individual agencies and the County became an important piece of the development of this study. McMAHON also conducted surveys of the heads of government in Sheboygan County and residents of the County to gauge stakeholder feedback about fire and emergency medical services in the County.

The following presents an overview of the work tasks completed by McMAHON during the project.

1. Developed a project team of appropriate users and stakeholders to oversee and participate in the project.
2. Conducted a Project Planning Meeting with the McMAHON Project Manager, the Project Team, and key project personnel. Defined scope and mission, discussed work plans, established liaison responsibilities, coordinated project schedules, and confirmed other general arrangements.
3. Obtained and reviewed documentation pertaining to this project, such as existing fire department documentation, policies and procedures, detailed call volume statistics, service contracts, surveys, and capital improvement plans. Data analysis included a review of call types, locations, date/times of calls, and agencies responding to those specific calls.
4. Assessed the current fire-EMS operations and shared services to assess future needs. Methods included conducting interviews and on-site observations with

representatives of the departments, Office of Emergency Management, and the Sheboygan County Fire Chief's Association. Interviews and observations primarily focused on the following issues:

- A. Current fire-EMS operations, staffing, and levels of service.
 - B. Fire and EMS service workload call volume and activity.
 - C. Fire and EMS operations and service expectations.
 - D. Current and anticipated budget issues.
 - E. Major equipment needs
 - F. Economic development plans
 - G. Facilities
 - H. Shared services
5. Prepared for and facilitated a project status meeting to discuss the results of the interviews, on-site observations, and preliminary findings with the Project Team.
 6. Determined any public safety industry standards and trends related to the Department's operational requirements. During the development of all recommendations, McMAHON considered many factors and standards as a basis for recommendations, including:
 - National Highway Safety Traffic Administration (NHSTA)
 - National Fire Service Accreditation Program (NFSAP)
 - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
 - Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA)
 - National Fire Administration (NFA)
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
 - Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating Schedule
 - Local Fire Protection Ordinances
 7. Developed a comprehensive fire and EMS sustainability analysis, utilizing the information provided by the documentation received, the interviews, a review of national standards, and on-site observations. The projected growth and level of service needs were considered during the development of these recommendations. Recommendations included:
 - Operational assessment of the Fire and EMS Departments, including recruitment, employee selection, staffing, training, National Incident Management System compliance, and management structure and practices
 - Service demand level and ability to meet the demand
 - Effectiveness and efficiency improvements
 - Evaluation of coordinated fire and EMS operations
 - Evaluation of shared services
 - Budgetary constraints
 - Any other issues identified during the analysis
 8. Facilitated a recommendation meeting to present preliminary recommendations and obtain feedback from the Project Team.

9. Developed a comprehensive detailed County Wide Fire-EMS Sustainability Analysis (Analysis), utilizing the information provided by the documentation and data received, the interviews, and on-site observations. The projected growth and level of service needs were considered during the development of these recommendations to include:
 - Operational assessments of the fire and EMS agencies, including recruitment, employee selection, staffing, training, National Incident Management System compliance, and management structure and practices
 - Service demand level and ability to meet the demand
 - Effectiveness and efficiency improvements
 - Evaluation of coordinated fire and EMS operations
 - Evaluation of shared services
 - Budgetary constraints
 - Any other issues identified during the analysis
10. Prepared budget estimates for findings and recommendations.
11. Prepared and delivered the draft report to the Project Team for review.
12. Received feedback from the Project Team regarding the content of the draft report. Changes to the analysis based on the returned comments were made, as deemed appropriate. Produced and delivered the final document copies to the Project Team.
13. Presented the findings and recommendations of the analysis.

III. SHEBOYGAN COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OVERVIEW

Sheboygan County is protected by twenty-three fire departments and seventeen emergency medical services (EMS) agencies. The make-up of the agencies varies, from an all-full-time career fire and EMS agency serving the City of Sheboygan to all volunteer agencies with just a few members. All agencies providing service in the County are dispatched by the Sheboygan County Sheriff's 911 Communication Center.

Fire and EMS agencies in Sheboygan County are organized as either municipal, private, or 501C3 organizations.

Most agencies are municipally organized and receive some level of municipal financial support. Orange Cross Ambulance is the largest private company providing services in the County.

The make-up of the employee base of fire and emergency medical services agencies in the County varies. The City of Sheboygan Fire Department is the only all-career fire and EMS agency. All other service providers in the County utilize a combination of full-time, part-time/paid-on-call, and volunteers to provide services.

Five agencies provide ambulance transport in Sheboygan County; the City of Sheboygan Fire Department, Orange Cross Ambulance, Kiel Fire Department, Plymouth Fire Department, and Random Lake Fire Department. Plymouth Fire Department acts as a backup ambulance provider to Orange Cross Ambulance in the Plymouth Fire and EMS Service Area.

Population: The United States Census Bureau estimates the population of Sheboygan County as of July 1, 2023, at 117,752. Approximately 50,000 of the population of Sheboygan County live in the City of Sheboygan. Over the last several years, employers in the County have seen a housing shortage in the area and are working to develop additional housing options in the County which will lead to increased population in the County.

Square Mileage: Sheboygan County has 511.5 square miles of land area and is the 57th largest county in the State of Wisconsin by total area.

Call Demand Analysis:

Sheboygan County Fire & EMS Incidents		
2021	2022	2023
11,901	13,252	13,005
Incident Count does not include non-911 responses by Orange Cross Ambulance		

Analysis of incident data for the year 2023 showed that nearly half of the incidents in Sheboygan County occur in the City of Sheboygan.

Approximately 80% of incidents countywide are for emergency medical services. The remaining 20% are for fire-related services, however, emergency medical services incidents often result in the dispatch of fire/emergency medical first responder services to assist the ambulance.

The most frequent reason for dispatch was “fall” (2,080 incidents). The second most frequent reason for dispatch in 2023 was for “sick person” (1,330 incidents).

The most frequent reason for dispatch that was not emergency medical related in 2023 was “fire alarm” (587 incidents).

IV. STATUTORY MANDATES FOR THE PROVISION OF FIRE & EMS SERVICES

Wisconsin Statutes detail the types of services that cities, villages, and towns in the State must provide their residents. If a service is not mandated by statute, it is under the discretion of the local governing body as to whether they wish to provide the service. The statutes do allow the various types of local government to provide these services through various methods, in other words, boards and councils can consider contracting for services, operating their own services, or combining with neighboring municipalities to provide services.

Summary of Service Requirements

- Towns – Must provide fire protection and ambulance service unless the ambulance service is provided by “another person”.

- Villages – Must provide fire protection if the population of the village is over 5,500. Villages are not required to provide ambulance service.
- Cities – Must provide fire protection, however, cities are not required to provide ambulance services.

V. SHEBOYGAN COUNTY FIRE & EMS AGENCIES

McMAHON consultants attempted contact with all fire and emergency medical service agencies in the County to understand the make-up of their organizations, how they are funded, apparatus and equipment owned, challenges faced by each of the organizations, and how they interact with each other today. McMAHON was able to contact all service providers based in Sheboygan County.

The fire department and emergency medical services providers in the County are all members of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). Sheboygan County is organized as Division 113 in the MABAS System. MABAS is a mutual aid organization that is the recognized fire mutual aid system in the State of Wisconsin. All participants sign a standard mutual aid contract. Over 1,100-member fire departments participate in the MABAS Agreement across eight states.

MABAS provides a pre-determined group of resources, grouped by alarm level, to respond to incidents in a fire department/EMS agency's response area. The resources and response plans are detailed in a response card. An incident commander activates the MABAS System based on information gathered enroute or at the scene. The incident commander can escalate the response which can ultimately, if needed, bring resources from neighboring states.

The MABAS System provides definitions of resource types, how many responders will respond with that resource, and a minimum level of training needed to respond. For example, the MABAS System requires four trained firefighters to staff a fire engine or ladder truck and two responders on a water tender and ambulance.

While the MABAS System is activated by the incident commander, fourteen fire departments in Sheboygan County participate in a form of mutual aid that is implemented automatically based on information obtained by the 911 Communications Center. This mutual aid is commonly known as “automatic aid”. In Sheboygan County, the term “automatic aid” is often interchanged with “response plans”. When a 911 call is received by the Communications Center, the 911 Telecommunicator gathers information about the call, and a “call for service type” is determined based on the information gathered. Certain types of calls for service in communities that participate in automatic aid can result in resources from not only the home agency being dispatched but also resources from neighboring agencies. Commonly, automatic aid is implemented for calls for service of higher acuity or significance. Staffing resources responding to calls for automatic aid are determined between the chiefs of the agencies that are parties to each automatic aid agreement.

Fire and EMS Stations

Fire Departments and first responder agencies in the County operate from twenty-seven stations in the County. The City of Sheboygan operates five of the twenty-seven stations. Orange Cross Ambulance operates from five stations in the County.

As part of the interviews conducted by MCMAHON, fire and EMS agency leaders were asked about the status of their stations. The following departments identified the need for improvements to one of their stations:

- Glenbeulah
- City of Sheboygan
- Town of Sheboygan
- Town of Sheboygan Falls
- Village of Waldo

Fire and Emergency Response Vehicles

There is a large inventory of fire apparatus in Sheboygan County. As fire departments, especially volunteer agencies, have struggled to recruit and retain members there is no longer a need for the size of fire apparatus fleets that departments once maintained. Additionally, the cost of fire apparatus has risen dramatically in the last three to four years. Some types of apparatus have risen nearly 40% in just three or four years. The delivery time for apparatus also increased from approximately a year to up to three years. During interviews with five departments in the County, representatives often commented that their departments are struggling to replace apparatus due to cost increases.

Sheboygan County Fire Apparatus/Equipment Summary		
Engines	Ladder Trucks	Tenders
49	7	28

Personnel

Data obtained by McMAHON indicates that approximately 750 responders are affiliated with fire and emergency medical services agencies in Sheboygan County. A large group of well-trained and qualified personnel is integral to the provision of effective fire and emergency medical services in a community. Almost all the departments interviewed commented that recruiting and retaining the number of personnel to respond effectively to incidents and provide administrative support and training for those personnel are major challenges in their department.

The personnel needs of each specific department varied; several commented that the availability of responders during day-time hours was a challenge for their agency, others commented that recruitment and retention of members in general was a challenge while others commented that the time commitment for initial training to join the fire or EMS agency was a challenge in their agency. Three departments identified the need for personnel to provide administrative support for their department.

Recruitment and retention issues exist in all sizes of agencies in Sheboygan County. Larger agencies like the City of Sheboygan Fire Department and Orange Cross Ambulance report recruitment and retention issues of qualified personnel for career, paid positions in their agencies as do the smallest agencies in the County. The median age for responders in the small, volunteer agencies is between 40 and 50 years old. In the next ten years, many of these volunteers will likely retire from service putting additional strain on a small group of remaining volunteers of younger ages.

Recruitment and retention are a significant challenge for fire and emergency services agencies in Wisconsin and across the United States. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the number of volunteer firefighters has decreased from 897,750 in 1984 to 676,900 in 2020. As the number of volunteer firefighters has decreased, the service demand has increased. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services recently reported that in the last decade, the number of patients treated by emergency medical services agencies in the State annually has nearly doubled to 900,000 patients while at the same time, the number of EMS providers has only increased 5%.

While departments across Sheboygan County reported fewer members joining their departments, all departments indicated they can continue to respond to incidents. The recent closure of two fire departments in the County does, however, raise concern for a trend that could impact agencies that are currently able to operate.

The cause of recruitment and retention issues in fire departments has been the source of a multitude of studies and reports in the last decade. A report by the National Volunteer Fire Council identified the following challenges in the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire and emergency responders:

- Time demands: two-income households, increased training time demands, higher emergency call volume, time demands for fundraising and administrative tasks in the fire and emergency services agency.
- Training requirements: Higher training standards, greater public expectation on response capabilities, and recertification demands.
- Increasing call volume: Fire departments assuming a wider response role in EMS and technical rescue, increase the number of automatic fire alarms and emergency medical responses.
- Changes in the “Nature of the Business”: Abuse of emergency services by the public, less of an emphasis on social aspects of volunteering.
- Changes in Sociological Conditions: Loss of community feeling, less community pride, less time for volunteering.
- Leadership Problems: Poor leadership and lack of coordination, failure to manage change.
- Aging Communities: Greater number of older people today, lack of economic growth and jobs in some towns.
- Internal Conflict: Disagreements among department leaders.

Training of Personnel

Initial training for firefighters and emergency medical responders is offered through the Wisconsin Technical College System. Requirements for training and certification as a firefighter in

the State originate from program requirements based on National Fire Protection (NFPA) standards. Initial emergency medical provider training depends on the level of licensure/certification being sought and is driven by the State Department of Health Services.

At a minimum, a firefighter in the State of Wisconsin must complete an Entry Level Firefighter Course. This is a sixty-hour course that includes both classroom and practical content. Firefighters who want to seek additional certification training can obtain Firefighter I and Firefighter II. Firefighter I requires an additional thirty-six hours above Entry Level Firefighter. Fees for Entry Level Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II are paid through the State of Wisconsin.

To drive fire apparatus, firefighters must complete an entry-level driver/operator-pumper or aerial course. Entry-level driver/operator pumper is a thirty-hour course. Entry-level aerial operator is a six-hour course. An additional thirty-six hours is required to become certified, however, it is not required to operate fire apparatus in the State. The cost to become a certified driver/operator-pumper is approximately \$250.

A firefighter who wants to become a fire officer (lieutenant, captain, chief officer) needs to complete a forty-hour fire officer course. The cost of this course is approximately \$300.

Emergency medical services providers can be certified/licensed at several levels in the State of Wisconsin including:

- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician
- Paramedic

Training for emergency medical service providers is primarily provided through the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Sheboygan County has an expansive system of emergency medical responders (EMR) that provides patient care prior to the arrival of an ambulance. Generally, ambulances are staffed by emergency medical technicians and paramedics, whereas EMRs function as first responders.

An EMR course is approximately 70 hours. EMRs are trained to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation, rescue breathing, defibrillation, and bleeding control. Some EMRs can administer emergency medications depending on their training and local protocols. To maintain EMR certification, individuals must complete eighteen hours of continuing education every three years. The cost of initial training as an EMR is approximately \$325.

To become an emergency medical technician-basic, individuals must complete a 190-hour course and pass a licensure exam upon completion of the course. The cost of initial training at this level is approximately \$1,000.

Advanced Emergency Medical Technician is a 108-hour course with a licensure exam upon completion. The cost of this course is approximately \$1,000.

A paramedic course requires 1,150 hours of coursework with a licensure exam upon completion. The cost of this course is approximately \$10,000.

Depending on licensure level, emergency medical technicians and paramedics must complete between thirty and seventy-two hours of continuing education every three years.

Lakeshore Technical College is the primary provider of firefighting certification and emergency medical training in Sheboygan County. Some departments on the south and west sides of Sheboygan County elect to send students to Moraine Park Technical College in Washington County. Lakeshore Technical College is in Cleveland just outside Sheboygan County. The school has a fire training facility on its campus. The fire and emergency medical programs regularly communicate with area departments about training needs and attend fire and EMS meetings in the County. Course availability is posted on the College's website.

Interviews with fire and emergency medical services providers indicated Lakeshore Technical College generally meets the needs of agencies in the County. As part of MCMAHON's fact-finding, agencies interviewed regularly commented on the time commitment required of their members to drive to the Lakeshore Campus. Fire and emergency medical courses regularly require practical demonstrations and testing in addition to classroom sessions thus requiring the need for on-campus programming. Lakeshore Technical College indicated they are beginning to explore online opportunities for classroom portions of courses, thus limiting the travel time for students to some classroom sessions and all practical sessions of courses. Lakeshore hopes to begin offering those options soon.

Continuing education for firefighters generally consists of fire department training officers providing ongoing education on critical tasks, skills, and equipment. There is no individual training requirement to maintain a firefighter certification, however, the State Department of Safety and Professional Standards (SPS) does require that departments have an established member training and education program that is managed by a qualified instructor. Training and education are required to be provided at least monthly to comply with SPS Standard 330, Fire Department Safety and Professional Standards.

Continuing education for emergency medical services providers is regulated by the State Department of Health Services – Emergency Medical Services Division.

Since continuing education for firefighters is much less prescriptive than continuing education for emergency medical services providers, the level of quality and quantity of training provided varies between departments. In Sheboygan County, fire department training officers have a training officers association that works with the County Fire Chiefs Association on training initiatives. There is an inventory of shared training props and resources that the departments can also share. Many departments reported challenges with developing formal training plans, and lesson plans, documenting training that has been completed, and being able to commit time to planning for upcoming training since nearly all the training officers in the fire departments are volunteers/paid-on-call.

Several departments indicated they would like improved access to a training facility where the departments could participate in larger-scale training such as live burn training that is more

accessible than having to drive to Lakeshore Technical College's facility. **McMAHON recommends the County and its municipalities conduct an analysis of building a fire and emergency medical services training facility somewhere centrally located in the County that would support initial and ongoing training for Departments in the County.**

VI. EVALUATING SOLUTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

In some way, all twenty-three fire departments and seventeen emergency medical services agencies in the County indicated they have unmet needs that limit their ability to continue to provide service to their respective response areas. The most frequent needs to sustain service that were identified as part of the study were:

- 1) Staffing
- 2) Funding
- 3) Training
- 4) Facility Improvements

While the needs of the forty agencies that provide services in the County are somewhat similar, the vast differences in governance, funding, and organizational structure between all those agencies make finding a single solution to sustain services that are acceptable to all stakeholders is challenging.

To assist in identifying sustainability solutions, MCMAHON sought out input from not only the agencies that provide service in the County but also from stakeholder groups including the Sheboygan County Heads of Government Group and members of the public using online survey tools.

Heads of Government Survey Summary

The Heads of Government Group in Sheboygan County consists of the chief elected official in each municipality. Twelve members of the group responded to a survey asking for their thoughts on fire and emergency medical services in their communities. A summary of the survey results is below:

- Over 90% of respondents indicated the fire department serving their community meets the needs of their municipality.
- 67% of respondents indicated the fire department serving their community is prepared to meet the needs of their municipality over the next five years.
- 100% of respondents indicated the EMS provider serving their community meets the needs of their municipality.
- 46% of respondents indicated the EMS provider serving their community is prepared to meet the needs of their municipality over the next five years.

- 67% of respondents would support a consolidation of fire and/or EMS services with neighboring municipalities if service levels remained the same or are improved and changes in costs of providing such services are neutral or savings is achieved.
- 75% of respondents would support additional collaboration (not consolidation) between fire and/or EMS agencies to maintain current departments in the County.

Public Survey Summary

A survey for the public to gauge their thoughts on fire and emergency medical services in their communities was also conducted. Six hundred and eighty one (681) responses to the survey were received. A summary of the responses is below:

- 89% of respondents felt the fire department serving their community meets the needs of their municipality.
- 80% of respondents felt the EMS provider serving their community meets the needs of their municipality.
- 72% of respondents would support a consolidation of fire and/or EMS services with neighboring municipalities if service levels remained the same or are improved and changes in costs of providing such services are neutral or savings is achieved.
- 92% of respondents would support additional collaboration (not consolidation) between fire and/or EMS agencies to maintain current departments in the County.

VII. SUSTAINABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Each fire department and EMS agency in Sheboygan County is unique, so solutions to sustain the current fire and EMS services in the County vary slightly in each organization. The most frequently heard need from fire and EMS agencies throughout the County was the need for additional staff. Additional staff in many of the volunteer departments looks different than additional staff in an all-career department like the City of Sheboygan Fire Department.

In the volunteer/paid-on-call departments, the primary staffing concern appears to center around fewer people joining the departments and staying involved with those departments. While departments reported fewer total members, none of the volunteer/paid-on-call departments reported they lacked sufficient staff to be able to respond to calls for service. These departments reported that the reduced number of active members has resulted in a reduction of the number of fire and EMS apparatus the department can deploy to a call for service. For many years, volunteer fire departments have been accustomed to being able to field multiple units to respond to an emergency – this is no longer the case in most departments. Today, being able to staff and deploy one or two units in a volunteer department

is considered a success. Volunteer departments also reported challenges with being able to accomplish administrative tasks relating to providing fire and EMS services.

In all-career departments like the City of Sheboygan Fire Department, there is a need for additional staff to perform fire inspections due to an increase in the total demand for service. The city continues to grow through land annexations and redevelopment. Additional territory to cover along with a societal-wide increase in service expectations from fire and EMS departments has contributed to the increased service demand thus the need for additional staffing in the City of Sheboygan Fire Department. The Department is no longer able to utilize on-duty firefighters and paramedics to perform fire inspections.

Ultimately, regionalizing fire departments and EMS agencies throughout the County will assist in coordinating operational and administrative tasks and reducing the total number of costly vehicles needed in each fire department. **McMAHON recommends that regionalization and consolidation of fire and EMS departments in Sheboygan County continue to be pursued as communities grow and some departments struggle to maintain sufficient staff to respond to emergencies, administer the departments, and afford the resources needed for those individual departments.**

An immediate move to large-scale regionalization of fire departments in the County will likely be met with resistance and challenges from some fire departments and some elected officials due to the long-held tradition of many active volunteer/paid-on-call departments in the County. Initiating a regionalized/consolidation effort with the City of Sheboygan and surrounding municipalities including the Town of Sheboygan, the Town of Wilson and the Village of Kohler, all who will likely need to consider career fire and emergency medical services departments in the coming years, is likely the best area of the County to begin discussion on regionalization and consolidation. A further analysis of partnerships, including some or all of those municipalities and others that are adjacent should be considered.

It will be critical that, if a regionalization/consolidation effort is further evaluated, a cost comparison of regionalized service compared to a non-regionalized service be evaluated based on a needed level of service and capital investments, which is not necessarily the level service that is being provided today. Today's service is not likely sustainable in the communities relying on part-time/paid-on-call/volunteers.

Other areas of the County will likely be pushed towards regionalization in the longer term as their local fire departments and first responders are unable to sustain operations alone which will present itself as an additional opportunity to begin regionalization and consolidation in those areas of the County.

Moving ahead with an effort to regionalize takes work and will require a political leader in each community who champion a movement to regionalize.

Fire Response Sustainability

Participation in automatic aid agreements by several departments in the County has provided support that those agencies have needed to field an adequate number of responders to incidents. Automatic aid is another term for what is locally referred to already as "Response Plans". Automatic aid results in resources from multiple agencies being dispatched simultaneously by the Sheboygan County 911 Communications Center based on information received at the time of the 911 call. **McMAHON**

recommends that the County Fire Chiefs Association and Sheboygan County work together to support the expansion of automatic aid agreements county-wide for fire departments.

As evidenced through interviews with the fire departments in the County, the turnout of responders for the volunteer/paid-on-call fire departments has dropped. Individual departments in the County are no longer able to field sufficient responders to safely and appropriately respond to incidents that require multiple units to respond. In many cases, during weekday, daytime hours, departments are only able to get one unit to respond to a call for service. As the volunteer/paid-on-call departments continue to struggle with recruitment, retention, and availability of responders, automatic aid will support and better coordinate responses from each participating agency.

It is important to caution the stakeholders in Sheboygan County that automatic aid alone will not solve recruitment, retention, and staffing issues in communities. Individual communities will need to continue to analyze their fire department's ability to safely and effectively respond to calls for service – automatic aid is intended for high-risk, low-frequency responses and cannot be relied upon to provide fire service in a community that has a struggling/failing fire department.

Many fire department responses are lower risk but of higher frequency. These responses will require the local fire department to handle the incident – automatic aid is not intended to handle these incidents. As the frequency of these incidents grows, community leadership will still need to consider bringing on staff that are paid to be in the fire stations across the County. While this expansion of staff will vary depending on the community, it should be clear that automatic aid is not a single solution to the challenges the fire service is facing in Sheboygan County – it is an approach to allow the current system of mostly volunteer/paid-on-call agencies to best serve their communities for high-risk events while leadership in those departments and municipalities prepare to fund additional staff in their fire departments. As communities need to expand full-time positions in their fire departments, this should be considered as an opportunity to regionalize fire departments across the County.

At a minimum, automatic aid agreements should be put in place for incidents, that based on information received by the 911 communications center, may require multiple fire units to mitigate. Examples of these incidents include:

- Report of a structure fire
- Smoke in a structure
- Water rescue
- Automobile crash with extrication required
- Technical Rescue
- Active Threat
- Life Safety/Mass Casualty Response

Each incident type identified as part of the county-wide automatic aid dispatch protocol should have a pre-determined number of apparatus and personnel that are dispatched at the time of the initial call to complete critical tasking identified for each incident type. For example, a structure fire might need four engines, a ladder truck, three tenders, an ambulance, and four chief officers to accomplish the critical tasks that are pre-identified.

- 1st Engine: Fire attack
- 2nd Engine: Water supply
- 3rd Engine: Back-up fire attack
- 4th Engine: Rapid Intervention Team
- Ladder Truck: Search and rescue and ventilation
- Tenders: Water supply
- Ambulance: EMS
- 1st Chief Officer: Incident Commander
- 2nd Chief Officer: Incident Commander Aid
- 3rd Chief Officer: Safety Officer
- 4th Chief Officer: Water Supply

Every structure fire dispatched by the Sheboygan County 911 Communications Center for agencies that participate in the automatic aid agreement should have this compliment (or whatever compliment is collectively determined by the participating fire chiefs) of resources dispatched. The chief officers of the departments that participate in the automatic aid program must be realistic in what their individual departments can support sending. It is unrealistic to think a single department, other than the City of Sheboygan, can routinely support more than two pieces of apparatus and a chief officer per response. Resources that are dispatched under the automatic aid agreement should exclusively be from the closest participating departments.

Identification of the types of incidents and a pre-determined number of apparatus and personnel to respond to those incidents would be under the direction of the Sheboygan County Fire/EMS Automatic Aid Agreement Chief Officer Committee. Each department participating in the Agreement would have a vote on the Chief Officer Committee. Other entities represented in committee meetings should include Sheboygan County 911 Communications Center and Sheboygan County Emergency Management.

Formalization of the automatic aid program should occur through an expansion of the current Sheboygan County-Wide Fire Mutual Aid Agreement. This agreement currently covers mutual aid outside of MABAS. A sample automatic agreement is included in the appendices of this report. The automatic aid should require a separate agreement and only involve the departments that elect to participate in the automatic aid.

To encourage participation in the automatic agreement and work under the standardized operational protocols required to make such an agreement successful, **McMAHON recommends that the County create a Fire/EMS Coordinator position under the direction of the Emergency Management Director.** The Fire/EMS Coordinator would provide administrative support and coordination to ensure the successful implementation and ongoing sustainability of the Sheboygan County Fire/EMS Automatic Aid Program for departments that participate in the automatic aid program and comply with the requirements of the program only. The budgetary impact of this recommendation is approximately \$110,000 - \$120,000 per position.

The Fire/EMS Coordinator, with the assistance of the Emergency Management Director, would also be tasked with supporting departments that participate in the automatic aid program with work to include:

- Provide administrative support to the Chief Officer Committee:
 - To formalize the incident types covered by the Agreement
 - To develop the resource packages for each incident type
- Liaison with the Sheboygan County 911 Communications Center for programming of the Computer Aided Dispatch Software's Response Plans to allow for dispatch of the appropriate resource packages and training related to automatic aid incidents.
- Develop, with assistance from training officers of the participating departments, training lesson plans needed to operationalize the Agreement. These training lesson plans should not only include initial training, but ongoing training on standardized operational procedures relating to responses under the Agreement. Departments participating in the automatic aid program would also likely see value in having this position support the development of standardized training for participating departments on topics to provide ongoing training and review of other critical tasks a firefighter must perform such as hose line deployment, search and rescue, and pumping operations.
- Managing an electronic, web-based resource where departments can access the standardized lesson plans and operational procedures relating to the Agreement.
- Provide training for and support the use of the First Due Records Management System that is funded by the County for participating departments.
- Support participating departments with fire inspections and code enforcement training.
- Assist participating departments with recruitment efforts including creating and overseeing a county-wide cadet/fire explorer program and attending events with opportunities to recruit members for participating departments throughout the County.
- Coordinate class and training needs with Lakeshore Technical College for participating departments.
- Assist each participating department in ensuring ongoing compliance with Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Standards Code 330 – Fire Department Safety and Health.
- Coordinating other initiatives as agreed upon by the Chief Officer Committee and the Emergency Management Director.

Depending on the number of departments that elect to participate in the automatic aid agreement, McMAHON has identified that there may ultimately be a need for two full-time Fire/EMS Coordinators. If more than one coordinator is needed, McMAHON recommends that the County be geographically divided into four quadrants. Each coordinator should be assigned two quadrants.

EMS Sustainability

The provision of emergency medical services in Sheboygan County relies on both emergency medical responders and ambulance transport services. In the City of Sheboygan, the fire department provides the first responder services and ambulance transport services. The City of Sheboygan targets having a first responder unit on the scene in six minutes from the time of dispatch for each call with an ambulance arriving shortly thereafter the first responder unit. Across the rest of the County, emergency medical responders (EMRs) support ambulance transport services provided by Orange Cross, Kiel Fire Department, Plymouth Fire Department, and Random Lake Fire Department. Current performance requirements for Orange Cross Ambulance require a response time of less than twenty-five minutes. If this response time is not met, Orange Cross must report the incident to Sheboygan County Emergency Management.

Emergency Medical Responders and other first responder services across the County, especially those in communities where volunteers/paid-on-call members provide these services, continue to struggle with recruitment, retention, and being able to provide around-the-clock services. In many cases, the first responders are part of the volunteer fire departments who are facing the same recruitment and retention struggles.

In several communities in the County, law enforcement agencies provide emergency medical responder services. Law enforcement officers are generally on duty and patrolling a community and can provide rapid response to emergency medical incidents. While law enforcement can provide effective EMR services, it does not come without challenges. For the most part, a traditional career path in law enforcement does not require emergency medical response duties. Hiring and retaining law enforcement officers has become significantly challenging for communities across the United States. The current shortage of candidates for law enforcement positions allows officers to move laterally across agencies as they seek opportunities that they see as a better fit. For some officers, being required to obtain and maintain emergency medical services training may be a reason to move to a different agency that doesn't require such training and day-to-day work as a medical responder.

The communities in Sheboygan County must continue to provide EMR services. Rapid response for citizens suffering cardiac arrest, trauma, and other significant medical emergencies is needed to save lives. To sustain these services, **McMAHON recommends that the Fire/EMS Coordinator(s) recommended earlier in this report should be charged with providing support to emergency medical responder agencies for communities that participate in the fire automatic aid program.** Providing similar recruitment efforts as those needed for the fire departments should assist in helping sustain EMR services.

The most important piece of sustaining emergency medical services in Sheboygan County is the need to ensure ambulance transport services remain available for emergencies. Ambulance transport providers, whether municipal, private, or non-profit, continue to struggle with low reimbursement rates from Medicare and Medicaid that do not match the costs of providing services thus risking their sustainability. Reimbursement rates have increased over the last three years; however, they still do not match the cost of providing 911 services. Since reimbursement rates for 911 services are low, ambulance transport

providers must rely on other sources of revenue to maintain their operations. In the case of municipal providers, many rely on a combination of having the employees operating the ambulances perform other functions such as firefighting, or on revenue from municipal tax levy to support the operation. Private and non-profit providers most often rely on revenue from performing interfacility transfers (moving patients from one hospital to another).

Orange Cross Ambulance is a non-profit venture. Revenue from ambulance transport is critical to sustaining Orange Cross' operation. Orange Cross does not receive any payment for service from the municipalities in the County or the County itself. Orange Cross does have an agreement with Sheboygan County that binds them to provide services in areas specifically defined in the contract and provide back-up services in other areas of Sheboygan County, however, the agreement can be terminated by Orange Cross with only 30 days' notice for certain circumstances. If this were to happen, a large area of Sheboygan County would be without ambulance transport services. Options for other providers to take on the 911 service work of Orange Cross Ambulance are very limited. **McMAHON recommends Sheboygan County and its municipalities strengthen the relationship with Orange Cross or another selected ambulance provider to ensure sustainable ambulance service in the County.**

The current agreement contains a limited number of performance measures for 911 ambulance services in the County that include having an ambulance enroute within two minutes of an emergency call and maintaining a total response time of no more than twenty-five minutes.

Orange Cross indicates that nearly 60% of the 8,000 calls their service responds to annually are for interfacility transfers. The remaining approximate 40% of calls for service are for 911 services in Sheboygan County.

Orange Cross Ambulance 911 Dispatches in Sheboygan County		
2021	2022	2023
3,808	4,006	3,272

In interviews, Orange Cross reports they regularly staff six ambulances during daytime hours and three to four ambulances at night. Two of the on-duty ambulances are utilized for Sheboygan County 911 calls.

Sustaining ambulance transport services in areas of Sheboygan County where municipal providers are not currently the primary provider of those services, will require supplemental funding from municipalities for those service providers. Private and non-profit ambulance providers constantly face a balancing act of bringing in revenue from interfacility transfers while ensuring sufficient resources are available to respond to 911 calls in a timely fashion. The location and time of 911 calls are generally unpredictable and can't be scheduled. While there is a level of data analysis that can be done to predict when emergent events might happen, these events don't always follow historical patterns, thus requiring a level of "blanket coverage". Maintaining this "blanket coverage" to ensure response times to life-threatening 911 emergencies limits an ambulance provider's ability to perform interfacility transfers, thus limiting a well-paying revenue source for the ambulance provider. The cost to maintain this state of

readiness for 911 ambulances cannot be supported by revenue from payments by private insurers, Medicare, and Medicaid just for 911 ambulance services.

McMAHON recommends that plans for providing a financial supplement to the contracted ambulance provider(s) should be in place in preparation for 2027 when a renewal of the *Agreement for Provision of Ambulance Services for Portions of Sheboygan County (Agreement)* occurs.

To accomplish the recommendation above, McMAHON recommends Sheboygan County work cooperatively with the municipalities in the County to seek municipalities that wish to participate in a contractual agreement with an ambulance provider. Those municipalities that are interested should collectively issue a joint request for proposal for 911 ambulance services in 2025. Minimally, the collective group of municipal partners should agree upon:

- 1) The level of service (paramedic, advanced emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician).
- 2) A “not to exceed” response time standard for ambulance services in the geographic area serviced.
- 3) The number of ambulances (and service level of those ambulances) that must be available for 911 service in the primary response area.
- 4) Data reporting requirements with defined reporting periods to ensure response time standards and quality standards are being met.
- 5) Penalties for failure to meet response time standards.
- 6) Termination notice requirements.

The request for proposal should require the respondent to comply with the contractual requirements of the request for proposal. Those requirements should also include the use of system status management, disclosure of billing and reimbursement data for 911 calls in the service area, full access to information on the respondent’s staffing and salary/benefit schedule, and a requirement for participation in a county-wide EMS oversight process. The respondent should also provide a proposed subsidy, if any, from the collective municipal partners for the respondent to provide such service. The collective group of municipalities should plan to share the cost annually.

McMAHON also recommends that communities that participate in this RFP should consider establishing a joint EMS district to allow for the use of a property tax levy cap exception under Wisconsin Statutes 66.06.02(3)(h). This would allow communities to exempt the increase in the property tax levy for charges from the joint EMS district if the increase is no more than CPI plus 2% and all participating municipalities adopt a resolution approving such an exception to the levy.

Determining the potential financial impact to support and sustain a county-wide EMS service and system requires understanding and analysis of key data. The key data includes:

- The number of 911-EMS calls annually
- The number of transports from 911-EMS calls annually.
- Service breakdown of patients transported (Advanced Life Support vs. Basic Life Support)
- Understanding of payment for transporting patients to hospitals
 - Insurance reimbursement for ambulance/patient transports to hospitals

- Insurance profile (often termed payor-mix) of patients transported to hospitals
- Cost projections to provide EMS coverage for Sheboygan County (areas outside of the City of Sheboygan).

Number of 911 EMS-related calls annually:

In 2018, EMS Statistical Research Scientist Aditya C. Shekhar, analyzed data collected by Firehouse Magazine’s National Run Survey of 70 sample departments. The breakdown of population to run volume shows that on average planners can expect to have 0.1225 calls per population per year. This would mean that Sheboygan County could expect approximately 8,000 calls for EMS annually.

Data reviewed during our project engagement revealed that there were 5,430 calls via 911 and a private line for EMS service in Sheboygan County (a geographical area outside of the City of Sheboygan) in 2023.

Transports

A review of the 2021 NEMSIS (National Emergency Medical Services Information) Data Report showed that approximately 57.4% of all 911 EMS activations, commonly referred to as a “run” are transported.

Data reviewed during our study showed that 3,258 patients (60%) were transported in the geographical area outside of the City of Sheboygan. This is consistent with the NEMSIS data from 2021 that 57.4% of calls for EMS turn into a transport of a patient(s) to the hospital.

Charges for Service

In reviewing data from a large, national ambulance billing company - the average charges for BLS and ALS from ambulance services in the Midwest region of the United States were the following:

- ALS-emergency (base only, no mileage) - \$1,690
- BLS-emergency (base only, no mileage) - \$1,023
- Mileage (patient loaded in an ambulance) - \$8.94

This data is consistent with services billing in Sheboygan County.

Reimbursement and Payor Mix Breakdown

When an ambulance service transports a patient to the hospital, they will bill the patient and/or the patient’s insurance company for services rendered. Insurance billing and payment is a complicated process for ambulance services. It begins with establishing the type of care provided to the patient. Did the patient receive ALS or BLS care? There are different charges and reimbursement levels between ALS and BLS care.

During our study, we found that 1,629 (50%) of patients transported were categorized as ALS for insurance billing purposes and 1,303 (40%) were BLS.

Generally, all private insurance companies follow the guidelines of the Federal Government’s Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). There are specific definitions that correlate with certain billing codes that ambulance services use when submitting claims. Billing is further complicated by the fact that

CMS generally does not allow an ambulance service to “balance bill” the patient for any charges not reimbursed by government insurance. If the ambulance service bills the Medicaid program, they must automatically take an assignment from Medicare. Taking an assignment means that the ambulance service accepts the fees paid by Medicare and they cannot bill the patient for the remaining unreimbursed charges. CMS publishes its reimbursement schedule annually.

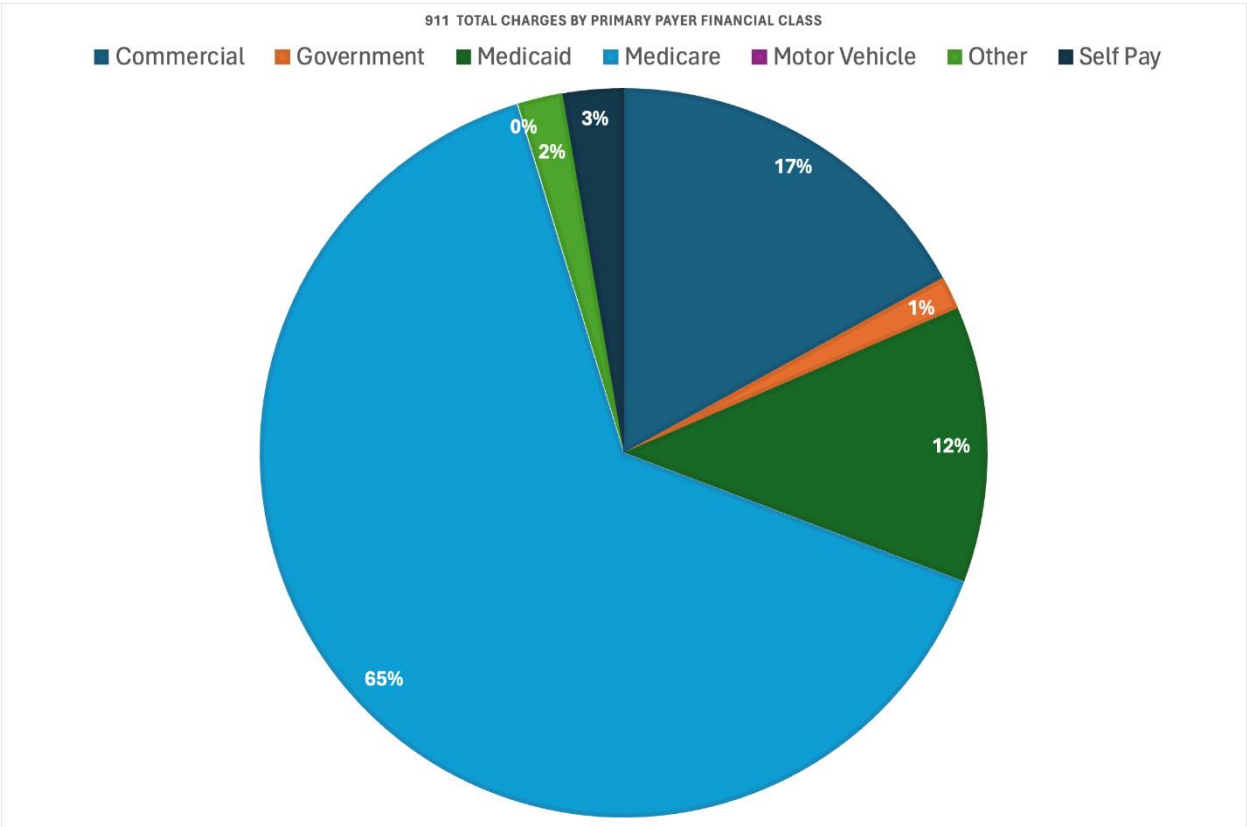
The 2024 Ambulance Fee Schedule set by CMS shows the following expected reimbursement for the following ambulance services:

HCPCS Billing Code	Description	Reimbursable Amount (Urban)
A0425	Ground Mileage Urban	\$8.94 per loaded patient mile
A0427	ALS-Emergency (response)	\$512.10
A0429	BLS-Emergency (response)	\$431.24
A0432	Paramedic Intercept	\$471.67

Private insurances work differently. Private insurance will reimburse nearly 100% of charges so long as they are medically justifiable. Ambulance services can “balance bill” the patient for any unpaid charges. Unpaid charges generally are co-pay related items for the individual subscriber.

Key data for understanding the overall cost to support an EMS system is understanding the revenue cycle – including the payor mix profile of insurances being billed for the care and transport of a patient.

During our study, we were able to determine the following breakdown of insurance coverages (payor mix).



Projected Revenue from Patient Billing

Advanced Life Support (ALS)

Insurance Type	Number of Patients Billed	Approximate Reimbursement	Total Reimbursement
Medicare Insurance	1,059	\$512.10	\$542,314
Medicaid Insurance	195	\$345.74 (2022)	\$67,419
Commercial Insurance	277	\$1,690	\$468,130
Self-pay	49	\$1,690 (60% payment)	\$49,686
Total: 1,629			Total: \$1,127,549

Basic Life Support (BLS)

Insurance Type	Number of Patients Billed	Approximate Reimbursement	Total Reimbursement
Medicare Insurance	847	\$431.24	\$365,260
Medicaid Insurance	156	\$185.58 (2022)	\$28,950
Commercial Insurance	222	\$1,023	\$227,106
Self-pay	39	\$1,023(60% payment)	\$23,938
Total: 1,264			Total: \$645,254

Total Approximate Reimbursement (no mileage): \$ 1,772,803

Cost Projections for Dedicated 911 Service

One 24-hour ALS ambulance and crew costs approximately \$1,200,000 per year. Costs include wages, overtime, paid time off, benefits, administrative overhead, depreciation for capital expenditures (ambulance, medical equipment), and consumables (fuel, medical supplies).

In 2018, EMS Statistical Research Scientist Aditya C. Shekhar, analyzed data collected by Firehouse Magazine's National Run Survey of 70 sample departments. She concluded that one ambulance unit could support on average 21,057 residents in each geographic area. The data came from a mix of urban and rural departments and geographic areas. She further found that each ambulance could respond to an average of 2,408 calls per year or 6.6 calls per day. The breakdown of population to run volume shows that on average planners can expect to have 0.1225 calls per population per year.

Key inputs from this research are:

- 1 EMS unit to 21,057 residents (availability).
- 1 EMS unit can respond to an average of 6.6 calls per day or 2,408 calls per year (workload).
- EMS can expect to run 0.1225 calls per resident (usage).

It would require 3 ambulances (all three would be ALS or paramedic units). The total cost for three ALS units would be \$3,600,000. The expected approximate shortfall to support a dedicated ALS ambulance service for Sheboygan County would be \$1,827,000.

A model such as the one described in this report should ensure municipalities without current municipal-based ambulance transport services would solidify the provision of ambulance transport services in Sheboygan County.

VIII. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Fire and emergency medical services are both critical public safety services for citizens in a community. As the Sheboygan area grows, the public's expectation for well-trained responders able to quickly respond to a myriad of all-hazards emergencies will grow also. The increase in annual calls for service from fire and emergency medical services demonstrates the annual increases that will continue for the foreseeable future.

Fire and emergency medical services responders in Sheboygan County are dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of the communities they protect. Recruiting and retaining those responders, whether they serve in a large or small agency, continues to be a struggle. The municipalities that rely on volunteer/paid-on-call services where employees are paid on a per-call basis will likely face even greater struggles over the next decade.

Sustaining fire and emergency medical services in Sheboygan County will require increasing financial support for emergency responders and cooperation between the agencies and municipalities that serve the public.

In this report, McMAHON provides a series of eight recommendations to sustain fire and emergency medical services in the County. Successfully implementing these recommendations will require a collective effort to achieve mutual success – that effort must include collaboration and cooperation with the end goal of serving all of Sheboygan County.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT FOR AUTOMATIC AID MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

This Agreement for Mutual Assistance, ("Agreement"), is entered into as of the date signed the respective parties, each a _____, each with proper authorization to execute this Agreement, (herein referred to collectively as "the Parties" or "the Departments" and individually as "a Party" or "a Department"), and is made pursuant to Wis. Stat. Secs. 66.0301 and 66.03125.

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide for the automatic dispatch of firefighting and emergency medical capabilities by the participating municipalities and departments when deemed necessary under the circumstances described herein.

The governing officials of the governmental entities set forth below, political subdivisions of the State of Wisconsin and the United States of America, desire to secure for each entity the benefits of automatic aid assistance in the protection of life and property from fire, medical emergencies, and other disasters. As such, this Agreement is intended to provide for the initial dispatch of sufficient fire department and emergency medical response resources to meet the minimum resources needed at initial dispatch for designated incident types as agreed upon by the Parties to this Agreement. This Agreement is not intended to replace other existing Mutual Aid Fire Service Agreements and Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Agreements.

The parties understand that reliance on automatic aid under this agreement is not intended to be a substitute for providing primary fire protection and emergency medical services.

Section 2. Authority.

This Agreement is made and entered into by the parties pursuant to the authority granted by Wisconsin Statute Section 66.0301, which authorizes municipalities to contract with each other for the receipt and furnishing of fire, protection, and emergency medical services; and Wisconsin Statute Section 66.03125, which authorizes fire departments to engage in mutual assistance within a requesting fire department's jurisdiction.

Section 3. Definitions.

Automatic Aid Mutual Assistance

Mutual Assistance as applied herein means the loaning of services with the accompanying apparatus, by one or more municipalities and/or departments, to meet an emergency beyond the capabilities of the municipality being aided.

Participating Municipalities

A municipality/department that commits itself to this mutual aid agreement by passage of a resolution or ordinance authorizing participation in the program with other participating member municipalities/departments for rendering and receiving mutual aid and in the event of an incident in accordance with team operating procedures.

Requesting Agency

The municipality/department in which an incident occurs that cannot be adequately handled by the local Fire Department or EMS service provider.

Aiding Agency

A municipality/department furnishing firefighting and emergency response personnel, equipment, and apparatus to a Requesting Agency's municipality.

Emergency condition

For this Agreement, any unexpected fire or emergency occurrence or occasion requiring immediate action, including any condition requiring fire protection or emergency medical services or both; a hazardous situation is a situation that creates a level of threat to life, property, health, or the environment.

Sections 4. Mutual Considerations and Conditions.

1. In consideration for each party's mutual assistance to the other upon the occurrence of an emergency condition and/or hazardous situation in any portion of the designated area where this Agreement is in effect, a predetermined number of firefighting equipment and/or emergency medical equipment or personnel of the parties may be dispatched to such point where the emergency condition and/or hazardous situations exists to assist in the protection of life and property, subject to the conditions hereinafter stated.

Details as to amounts and types of assistance to be dispatched, logistical methods of dispatching and communications, training programs and procedures and areas to be assisted will be developed by the Chiefs of the fire departments from the respective parties and Sheboygan County Emergency Management. These details will be stipulated in an Operational Policy and signed by the Chiefs of the departments upon authorization of this Agreement from their respective governing bodies. No party shall have any obligation according to this Agreement to another party unless and until an Operational Policy is executed between the respective parties. Said Operational Policy may be revised or amended at any time by mutual agreement of the

Fire Chiefs and Sheboygan County Emergency Management as they are so respectively authorized and as conditions may warrant. The Operational Policy should be reviewed annually and as needed.

2. Personnel and equipment dispatched according to this agreement shall report for direction and assignment incident commander of the agency with jurisdiction in which the mutual assistance service is being provided and under the Operational Policy.
3. Either party may decline a request for mutual aid if, in the best judgment and discretion of the responding party's fire/EMS chief or other ranking officer in charge at the time, the safety of the responding party's own jurisdiction's inhabitants would be excessively compromised or otherwise put in unwarranted jeopardy. In the event of such a decision, the responding party shall immediately notify the Sheboygan County 911 Dispatch Center of its decision. These actions shall be monitored by the Chief or their designees to ensure equitability of services.

No liability of any kind or nature shall be attributed to or be assumed whether express or implied by a party hereto, its duly authorized agents, and personnel for failure or refusal to render aid. In addition, there shall not be any liability for a party that withdraws aid once provided according to the terms of this Agreement. However, once a request is accepted it should generally be carried through and not withdrawn.

4. While it is deemed equally beneficial, sound, and desirable for the parties of this Agreement to work collaboratively under the terms of this Agreement, it is not the intent of the parties to transfer risk to or assume liability on behalf of another party to this Agreement. At all times while equipment and personnel of any party's fire or EMS department are traveling to, from, or within the geographical limits of any other party under the terms of this Agreement, such personnel, and equipment shall be deemed to be employed or used, as the case may be, in the full line and cause of duty of the party which regularly employs such personnel and equipment. Further, such equipment and personnel shall be deemed to be engaged in a governmental function of its governmental entity.
5. This Agreement is not intended to create an employer/employee relationship between the parties. The requesting party, or the party in charge under the Operational Policy, shall assume control over the operations of the mutual aid incident scene, however, it shall be each party's responsibility to maintain the safety of its own personnel and others at the scene or within its immediate vicinity. Each party to this Agreement, concerning any other parties to this Agreement, is responsible for the operation of its vehicles and equipment and the acts of its personnel responding to a request for mutual assistance while they are providing assistance in the requesting community. The employees that may provide services under this Agreement shall continue to be the employees of his or her employing parties' agency and shall be covered by his or her employing parties' fire/EMS department for purposes of worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, benefits under Chapter 40 Wisconsin Statutes and any civil liability insurance. Any employee while providing services under this Agreement is considered, while so acting, to be in the ordinary scope of his or her employment with his or her employing parties' fire/EMS department.

The terms and provisions of this Agreement are applicable to and only for the benefit of the parties hereto, and not to any other person or claimant, not a party hereto, and shall not under any circumstances be construed to be enforceable by or in any way used as evidence for any claim for wages, benefits or the like which may be due to any employee of any party hereto.

6. The parties to this Agreement that are governmental entities declare and acknowledge that they are governmental entities entitled to governmental immunity under the common law and under Section 893.80 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and the parties agree that nothing contained herein shall waive the rights and defenses to which each party may otherwise be entitled, including all of the immunities, limitations, and defenses under Section 893.80 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The parties also agree that they are not waiving any other immunities or defenses available to them under state, federal, or administrative law. All the provisions of Section 895.46 of the Wisconsin Statutes also apply.
7. Each party hereto shall maintain an insurance policy or maintain a self-insurance program that covers activities that it may undertake by virtue of being a party to this Agreement. Annually and upon request, a party must provide evidence of compliance with the insurance provisions of this section to the other party.
8. The parties agree that each shall respond without any cost, charge, or financial assessment to the other for cost incurred according to this Agreement. However, all parties providing assistance hereunder shall be entitled to the equitable distribution between the parties providing services of any expenses recovered from other responsible entities. The Chief or designee of the Department receiving reimbursement shall be responsible for working with the other parties to find a reasonably equitable distribution among all claimant departments. Nothing herein shall operate to bar any recovery of funds from any State or Federal agency under any existing State and Federal laws.
9. In the event that any individual performing duties subject to this Agreement shall be named as a defendant party in any state or federal civil lawsuit brought by a third party, arising out of his or her official acts performed within the scope of his/her duties pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, such individual shall be entitled to the same benefits and the same insurance of his/her employing agency that he or she would be entitled to receive had such civil action arisen out of an official act within the scope of his or her duties as a member of the department where regularly employed. Moreover, 895.46 Wis. Stats., shall apply to such individual performing duties subject to this Agreement. Accordingly, the benefits of defense and indemnification to third-party lawsuits as described in this paragraph shall be supplied by the party where the individual is regularly employed.
10. This Agreement shall commence and become effective as to any party shall be on the date of the signature of any such party hereto and shall supersede any previous versions of this mutual aid agreement entered into by the parties.
11. It is agreed by and between the parties hereto that any party hereto shall have the right to terminate this Agreement upon ninety (90) days' written notice to the other parties' Fire/EMS Chief. The cancellation notice shall be filed with the Clerks/Secretary of each municipality/entity.

12. In case one or more of the provisions contained in this Agreement shall be for any reason held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, such invalidity, illegality, or unenforceability shall not affect any other provision hereof, and this Agreement shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision had never been contained herein.

Section 5. Effect of Other Agreements

1. The elected bodies for the undersigned may from time to time enter into separate agreements for the purchase and/or equitable sharing of equipment, personnel, etc. with and between any of the undersigned parties. Said separate agreements are not intended to impact the intent or terms of this Mutual Aid Agreement contained herein.
2. Separate agreements under this section should be approved subject to notification of all of the undersigned parties.
3. Should any party outside of Sheboygan County be considered as a party to this agreement, all undersigned parties should be notified of such interest and intent.

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. This Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin. This Agreement represents a complete understanding of the parties with respect to this subject matter referred to herein and may not be amended except upon the mutual written consent of the parties. This Agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts or duplicate originals, each of which shall constitute and be deemed as one in the same document.
2. This Agreement is hereby approved subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations set forth in said agreement.
3. The parties hereby enter into this Agreement knowingly, voluntarily, and for the benefit of their communities, humanity, and the common good.
4. The undersigned representatives of each party are hereby authorized to abide by the terms, conditions, and limitations set forth in this Agreement.

This signatory certifies that this Agreement for Mutual Assistance has been adopted and approved by ordinance, resolution, or other manner allowed by law, a copy of which is document is attached hereto.

Municipal Corporation

Signatory

The Fire & EMS Coordinator, in conjunction with the Sheboygan County Fire and EMS Automatic Aid Agreement Chiefs Committee develops fire and EMS recruitment programming and efforts for participating agencies.

The Fire & EMS Coordinator plans and estimates the need for additional equipment or special services and makes recommendations to the Director of Emergency Management.

The Fire & EMS Coordinator prepares reports for the Director of Emergency Management relating to the Agreement, fire and EMS training, mutual aid programs and other related activities.

The Fire & EMS Coordinator supports the duties of the Emergency Management Director.

Any other duties ordered by the Emergency Management Director or his/her designee.

III QUALIFICATIONS

State of Wisconsin Driver's License

High school diploma: 60 college credits preferred.

State of Wisconsin Firefighter II

State of Wisconsin Driver/Operator – Pumper (Aerial preferred)

State of Wisconsin Fire Officer I

State of Wisconsin Emergency Services Instructor I

State of Wisconsin Emergency Medical Technician - Basic

Proficient in use of computer applications.

Possess the ability to provide competent public instruction and speaking.

Previous fiscal management experience preferred.

Self-motivated with the ability to effectively, efficiently and entirely complete assignments with minimal supervision.

Ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written communications.

Ability to work independently or as part of a team

Ability to accept supervision.

Ability to function in stressful situations.

Ability to maintain confidentiality and good working relationships with co-workers and other staff.

Ability to maintain regular and predictable work attendance.

IV WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

The Fire & EMS Coordinator is directly supervised by the Emergency Management Director.

The Fire & EMS Coordinator must work well with all members of the EMS/fire community, the County Board and the public.

V WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Fire & EMS Coordinator is salaried and works eight hours per day, Monday through Friday. The EMC may be required to work extra hours due to Department needs and is available on cell phone 247/365.

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Recommendations	
1	MCMAHON recommends the County and its municipalities conduct an analysis of building a fire and emergency medical services training facility somewhere centrally located in the County that would support initial and on-going training for Departments in the County.
2	MCMAHON recommends that regionalization and consolidation efforts of fire and EMS departments in Sheboygan County continue to be pursued as communities grow and some departments struggle to maintain sufficient staff to respond to emergencies, administer the departments and afford the resources needed for those individual departments.
3	MCMAHON recommends that the County Fire Chiefs Association and Sheboygan County work together to support expansion of automatic aid agreements county-wide for fire departments.
4	MCMAHON recommends that the County create a Fire/EMS Coordinator position under the direction of the Emergency Management Director.
5	MCMAHON recommends that the Fire/EMS Coordinator(s) recommended earlier in this report should be charged with providing support to emergency medical responder agencies for communities that participate in the fire automatic aid program.
6	MCMAHON recommends Sheboygan County and its municipalities strengthen the relationship with Orange Cross or another selected ambulance provider to ensure sustainable ambulance service in the County.
7	MCMAHON recommends that plans for providing a financial supplement to the contracted ambulance provider(s) should be in place in preparation for 2027 when a renewal of the <i>Agreement for Provision of Ambulance Service in Portion of Sheboygan County</i> occurs.
8	MCMAHON also recommends that communities that participate in this RFP consider establishing a joint EMS District to allow for use of a property tax levy cap exception under Wisconsin Statutes 66.06.02(3)(h).